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AUTHOR Hilbert, Harvey C.; Morris, Judson H., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

In order for Child Protective Services (CPS) to be increasingly effective in a community, there must be a continuing attempt to build and maintain a sense of trust and credibility between local CPS agencies and school systems. Literature justifies the need for a teacher inservice training by the necessity of developing greater community awareness in identification and treatment of child abuse/neglect, and the heightened professional self-image such enterprises impose on workers. With the goals of increasing teacher knowledge and skills, community awareness, and the amount of local CPS workers and educators interaction, a CPS inservice model was employed in rural York County, South Carolina, and urban Cuyahoga County, Ohio. The model used four 1-hour session-blocks which could be implemented as separate units. The four blocks were understanding child abuse/neglect, recognizing and reporting abuse/neglect in the school, child protection laws and related legal issues, and preventing abuse/neglect. Pre/post-tests were administered in York County and only a post-test in Cuyahoga demonstrating an increase in teacher knowledge over most CPS areas, and the need for a greater emphasis over a few specific areas. Recommendations included the implementation of training for other community groups. (PM)

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CHILD ABUSE TEACHER INSERVICE TRAINING: A Cooperative Venture

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Harvey C. Hilbert, MSSA
Lecturer
Department of Social Services
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, Ohio

and

Judson H. Morris, MSW
Lead Team Social Worker
S.C. Community Long Term Care Program
Sumter, S. Carolina

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CHILD ABUSE TEACHER INSERVICE TRAINING: A Cooperative Venture

Abstract

This paper presents a model for engaging child protective services workers in a community education experience involving public school teachers and reports the results of attempts to implement the model in two widely divergent geographical areas: York county, South Carolina, and Cuyahoga county, Ohio. Goals of training are specified, the model and access issues are discussed. Statistical results of pre- and post-tests are presented with discussion. The article concludes with a set of specific recommendations.

CHILD ABUSE TEACHER INSERVICE TRAINING: A Cooperative Venture

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to present a model for teacher child abuse and neglect training conducted by local child protective services units and to report the results of its implementation in two widely divergent geographic areas. In order for Child Protective Services (CPS) to be increasingly effective in a community there must be a continuing attempt to build and maintain a sense of trust and credibility between local CPS agencies and school systems. This is necessary, the authors feel, because it is from educational institutions in the community that many abuse and neglect referrals are generated. Unless there is a shared understanding of what constitutes a valid report of child maltreatment, clarity of role and appropriateness of protective intervention can be jeopardized.

The local CPS agency is in an ideal position to insure against this potential threat to services and improve their existing relationship with local schools, as it is the local CPS agency that is identified as the community's responsibility of expertise in such matters. Moreover, there is often a mandate stemming from state law requiring the local CPS organizations to provide education and facilitate awareness of issues involving protection of children to those persons or institutions who, by virtue of their role or position in the community, are in situations where they may have knowledge of potential cases of child abuse and neglect. The authors of this paper suggest that teacher training by CPS personnel may be a useful method of addressing this issue, as well as the issues involved in building trust and credibility between CPS agencies and local school systems. In addition, the authors suggest this may have the net effect of assisting the process of service delivery by improving the interaction and communication between these two major components of the child protection system.

Support from the Literature

One of the twelve "operational standards" of the American Humane Association is directed toward the maintenance of a "continuing program of community relations"[1]. This standard is focused on the CPS agency's role of interpreting itself to the community and educating the community as to the nature of, existence of, and responsibility towards the phenomenon of child abuse and neglect. In addition, CPS agencies ought to make sure there are "clear lines of responsibility" between various community groups [2]. Halfer and Schmidt suggest that there are three basic components of what they refer to as a 'community-based child abuse and neglect program'[3]. These are: acute care and diagnostic assessment, long term therapeutic care, and education, training and research[4]. These authors suggest that it is the education and training component that may have the greatest long-term impact and is "probably the most important and influential segment" of all of the other components [5]. According to these authors, this component would direct its attention to the following areas; public education, educating those in authority, educating front line professionals, training paraprofessionals, and performing research and evaluation tasks. Helfer and Schmidt make the point that traditional in-service training fosters in-breeding and assumes that professionals know what they are doing in terms of the problem at hand; child abuse and neglect [6]. To counteract this, they suggest that such programs become multidisciplinary.

While we support a multidisciplinary approach to child protective services, it cannot be overlooked that, in most situations, the local CPS agencies are directly responsible for the task of protecting the community's children. We suggest that, in an effort to build a multidisciplinary approach, a necessary first step is the initiation of outreach training programs like the one pro-

posed in this paper. Such a position is similar to that advocated by Carroll and Schmitt's idea that departments of social services may be viewed from an 'open systems' perspective [7]. These authors see the local CPS agency in the role of community organizer. They suggest that the local CPS units "can develop liaison representatives with each school district" in an effort to develop trust between agencies [8]. More to the point, Carroll and Berdie point out the need for diverse experiences on the part of the protective services worker in order to avoid "burn out" and provide for skill acquisition [9]. In this case, the supervisor is singled out as one who has the responsibility for improving services, maintaining worker morale, and developing varied skills. Assigning workers to do inservice training and community education is suggested as a primary means of accomplishing these tasks [10].

From this literature it would seem that there are two interactive and interrelated aspects of utilizing child protection agency personnel in community education projects. First, there is the necessity of developing greater community awareness and participation in the area of identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect. This seems to be understood as a call for a multidisciplinary approach to the problem. Second is the effect of such enterprises on the part of child protective services worker's sense of professional self-image. As Clearfield has pointed out, professional self-image may be defined as "the evaluation of the occupational group by the members of that group" and reflects worker attitudes regarding how the group is perceived by society in terms of prestige, worth, personal characteristics, opportunities, and achievements [11]. It has been noted that through the use of inservice training and community education projects, workers may be able to avoid burn out and improve their skills, both of which may enhance their professional self-image.

A Model for CPS Teacher Inservice Training

Training Goals

The goals of our Teacher Inservice Training Model focused on three areas and were stated in the following way:

1. Increasing the knowledge and skills of teachers regarding CPS indicators, behaviors, processes, and law;
2. Increasing community awareness regarding the issue of child abuse and neglect;
3. Increasing the amount and quality of interaction between local CPS workers and educators.

Timing

One of the most critical factors in effective training is that of time. CPS units planning training for educators must be aware that teachers do not have an unlimited supply of available time and must, therefore, be willing to be flexible in planning training schedules. Our model is constructed in such a way that the sections of content are quite able to be implemented as autonomous and separate units. Each unit can be presented within a one hour block of time.

Training Sessions

Block One: Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect.

This section of training introduces the major aspects of child abuse and neglect. It emphasizes the following content areas; nature of child abuse and neglect, extent of the problem, and some of the causes of the phenomenon.

Block Two: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in the School

This block of training must be developed with school administrators as the various school systems may have differing policies, regarding the internal handling of reports. However, presentation of indicators for each known type of abuse and neglect may remain constant. In this effort, attention should

be paid to the diverse experiences of local CPS workers. The net effect here is the acknowledgement of geographical differences in community standards and in the recognition that local workers are in a position to know what these standards are and how they are recognized.

Block Three: The Child Protection Laws and Related Legal Issues

This section covers the laws of the state pertaining to issues involving child protection. Legal definitions of the problem are discussed, as well as the rules of evidence, mandated reporting procedures, and issues of legal responsibility for teachers, social workers, lawyers, and medical personnel. It is particularly important here to stress immunity for damages in respect to persons who report suspected cases.

Block Four: Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

In this section, the need for comprehensive community involvement is stressed, accentuating the concept of a 'community-based program' discussed earlier. Existing programs in the school, community, and local Department of Social Services are identified and discussed in terms of their relevance to the needs of educators, CPS workers, and clients.

Implementing the Model

Brief Description of Target Counties

York County, South Carolina, is a predominately rural area. The CPS unit is within the auspices of the county Department of Social Services. This unit is comprised of four B.A. level social workers and one M.S.W. supervisor (1981-1982). The York county Department of Social Services CPS unit provides services to a county with a population of just over 100,000 persons. The unit receives approximately 365 reports of child abuse and neglect per year and each worker carries an average caseload of thirty-three families.

In contrast, Ohio's Cuyahoga County is largely urban with a population in excess of 1,000,000 persons. The CPS unit in that county is a part of

the Department of Public Welfare and maintains a staff of over 100 case workers with 17 supervisors. The unit receives approximately 4500 new reports per year. The CPS unit's entry level requirements were recently up-graded from a 7th grade education to the requirement that all newly hired social workers have at least a bachelors degree in social work or a closely related field.

In terms of child protection laws, South Carolina has a comprehensive child protection act, enacted in 1977. In contrast, Ohio's law, also revised in 1977, seems less comprehensive. In fact, several attempts to obtain a copy of this law were met with failure. (One such request was to a member of the Health and Human Services committee of the Ohio Senate, who suggested that there was no such thing as a "child Protection Law" in Ohio [see Appendix 1]). Copies of both laws are contained in Appendix 2. Interviews with several school personnel in Cuyahoga County revealed a sense that educators were out of touch with the child welfare process. This was so in spite of a report from a telephone interview with the county CPS unit that it accomplished over two hundred "speeches" in the community last year. According to this source, the CPS unit does not reach out to the school systems for the purpose of community education, rather it "waits for them to come to us" [12].

When comparing South Carolina and Ohio, both states' child protection laws permit school systems to develop their own procedures for child abuse and/or neglect referrals to child welfare units. These school referral procedures are based upon policies internal to each school system, rather than the procedures outlined by the states' child protection laws (see Appendix 2).

Accessing the School Systems

The York County CPS Unit supervisor approached the proposed child abuse teacher inservice training from two aspects. First (and most critical), to secure approval for the teacher training from the school district superinten-

dents, school boards, principals, and teachers. And second, to insure teacher training would be credited by the local college (Winthrop College) so that the teachers were awarded recertification credits toward maintaining their teaching certificates. An outline of the training (see Appendix 3) was presented to all the school personnel and appropriate college certification staff; and was approved by all parties. Now that the training package had both school system approval and teacher credits, it was a most attractive teacher inservice training program. The proposed child abuse and neglect teacher inservice training package was designed for two 2-hour modules for a total training time of four hours and had been awarded three recertification credits.

Accessing the Cuyahoga County school systems proved to be far more difficult. The county is divided into several major systems within a hierarchy. Several systems were approached with the same plan as was outlined above. The authors were referred in and around several levels of the hierarchy only to find access blocked. Finally, access was gained through personal contact with one principal in a suburban elementary school. However, the principal indicated he was only able to give permission to perform the testing aspects of the project. In order to do training we would have to gain approval from higher sources to go through a review board. It was decided at that point to reconceptualize the Cuyahoga site as a post-test only control measure. Interestingly, and perhaps as a brief finding, permission to do training at the school was given after the testing was complete.

Integrating Training and Research

The training was offered once to each of the two rural school districts in York County. Each program had approximately fifty teachers participating. These teachers taught classes ranging from elementary grades through high school. The local CPS unit provided useful handouts and brought to the training

their knowledge and skills as experienced case workers. Each time the training was accomplished it was done in a different school facility. In addition, the workers providing the training went on a rotation basis to insure each the opportunity to gain from the experience. This procedure also maximized worker visibility, broadened their concept of service provision and helped them understand in an experiential fashion the idea that CPS was a community process.

The training itself was a multimedia presentation which included use of State D.S.S. training tapes, lecture, group participation, and printed hand-outs. The training lectures and hand-outs were developed by the CPS unit, but the videotapes were acquired by the CPS Unit from the York County Department of Social Services (which utilized the training tapes for new CPS social workers). Also included in the training format was a teacher CPS knowledge pre-test and post-test. These instruments were approved by the accrediting college (Winthrop College). The goal of the pre-test was to measure teacher knowledge about child abuse and neglect, and the services available to children at risk. Another purpose of the pre-test was not only to measure teacher knowledge, but just as important, to indicate to the teachers what knowledge of child abuse and neglect was most important; and which parts of the training would be most important to them. The post-test had two objectives: 1) to measure if the teachers learned from the inservice training; and 2) (and most important to the teachers) a score of 70% on the post-test was needed if the teachers were to earn their recertification credits for the training. In Ohio the pre-test instrument was administered to the teacher group as a post-test measure.

Findings

From direct feedback from teachers, the inservice training was very successful. Comments from teachers and other school personnel were very

positive, and the training evaluations (which were furnished by Winthrop College), were high. In keeping with the goal of increasing interaction between social workers and educators, the process of providing the training was reported to be an enjoyable and educative experience by the CPS social worker/trainers. Secondly, the CPS social workers in preparing to provide the CPS teacher inservice training learned more about child abuse and neglect because they had to develop the training package.

While measures of increased knowledge of child abuse and neglect, child protective services, and the law on behalf of the teachers were accomplished through a pre-test and post-test procedure, the authors make no claim to performing experimental or quasi-experimental research. At best, the design utilized in this project was pre-theoretical, similar to an amalgomation of the one-group pre-test-post-test design and the static-group comparison noted by Campbell and Stanley [13]. There was no random assignment to groups as the geographical nature of the project made this prohibitive. As such, then, the results of the testing cannot be considered generalizable to any group but those tested. Nor can we suggest that the results of the post-test in the group receiving training improved as a result of the training. However, the group did improve its scores and comparisons between the pre-test York Group with the post-test only Ohio Group reveal some interesting similarities.

Table One, below, displays Inservice Training Gain Scores in comparison with the Ohio post-test-only Group.

INSERVICE TRAINING GAIN SCORES

	York County				Cuyahoga County		
	$\bar{X}$	%	n		$\bar{X}$	%	n
Pre-test	9.88	76	65	Post-test	9.11	70.1	17
Post-test	24.50	98	85				
Differences		+22					

TABLE ONE

While there was no deliberate effort to match groups or in other ways make them equivalent, the York Group scored very similarly to the Ohio Group on the same instrument. (The only differences between these two instruments were those making the instrument relevant to each Group's state laws and statistics (See Appendices 4-6)). Once the Inservice Training was complete the post-test was administered to the York Group. As indicated in Table One, the mean scores increased by twenty-two percentage points, with the post-test improving to an average score of 98 per cent.

Examination of the individual items on the pre-test also reveal some interesting data. Consistently missed questions clustered around knowledge of statistics regarding abuse reports and deaths which occurred as a result of abuse. Aside from this, as Table Two indicates, two other questions were most often missed; the question addressing reporting and the question addressing abusive parents as psychotic. More than eighty-one per cent of the York Group answered this question wrong in comparison with a similar eighty-two per cent of the Ohio Group. Clearly, most teachers seem to think abusive parents are mentally ill - a fact CPS units ought pay particular attention to in their educational efforts.

Table 2

PERCENTAGES OF MOST FREQUENTLY MISSED QUESTIONS

QUESTION AREA	YORK GROUP	OHIO GROUP
Number of National Reports	70.8 (46)	94.1 (16)
Number of National Deaths	52.3 (34)	76.5 (13)
Number of State Reports	83.1 (54)	100.0 (17)
Requirement to Report	7.7 (5)	17.6 (6)
Percentage of Parents Psychotic	81.5 (53)	82.3 (14)
( ) = Number	N=65	n=17

These data would indicate that indeed, at least three areas of knowledge regarding abuse and neglect and the law, needed addressing by the trainers. In addition, while the mean pre-test percentage score was 76%, just under

half (46%) of the subjects in the York Group failed to pass this test (passing was a score of seventy per cent or above). In the Ohio Group 65% failed the test (n=11).

In addition to the statistical analysis, some other important feedback the CPS Unit received was from the referrals the teachers made after the inservice training. The number of referrals did not increase, but the children were now being referred before serious abuse occurred (the teachers seemed to be recognizing the indicators more readily). Also, because the teachers now knew the CPS social workers, the teachers seemed more willing to cooperate and develop a CPS social worker-teacher team effort to help the referred children. This better communication between teachers and CPS social workers developed because each group now better understood the responsibilities and stresses of each other. Apparently, a greater respect had developed and this is a very important factor for the providing of quality child protective services.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It would seem, from our experience with this project and from the results of the pre- and post-tests, that all parties gained from the inservice training and that our goals were met. Conceptually, we believe this model has excellent utility from two perspectives. First, it enables an experiential form of continuing education to occur for social workers and educators. Second, we believe the model greatly facilitates a better understanding not only of child abuse and neglect, but of the interdependence and interrelationship between CPS units and school systems.

The authors would like to conclude this article with the following recommendations:

1. That teacher training continue as it seems to improve the quality and effectiveness of the child protective services process.
2. That training for other community groups occur because it is a means of bringing the community into the child protective services process.
3. That a community educator role for child protective services social workers be developed and training provided in order to meet the needs of that role.
4. That special attention in training and community awareness programs be paid to the legal requirements of reporting child abuse and/or neglect.
5. That an effort be made by child protective services social workers to clarify community understanding of the mental status of child abuse and neglect perpetrators.

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